



[Andy Blunden](#)

# Preface to the Phenomenology

*On scientific knowledge*

This, the Preface to Hegel's "Phenomenology" (attached; download linked below) is a full-length, full-strength reading of the difficult man's own work. It has 72 numbered passages and 21485 words. It is longer than a normal Communist University reading text.

So be it.

For Hegel's Phenomenology, MIA gives an [Index](#), a fuller [Contents](#) page, the [Preface](#), an [Introduction](#), and the remainder of the work, in numbered passages up to number 808. In the spirit of Tony Buzan, let us show here the contents of the preface, listed within the main Contents:

## Headings in Hegel's "Preface to the Phenomenology"

<u>Passages</u>	<u>Head</u>	<u>Heading</u>
1-4		
5-6	<a href="#"><u>2.</u></a>	The element of truth is the Concept and its true form the scientific system
7-12	<a href="#"><u>3.</u></a>	Present position of the spirit
13-16	<a href="#"><u>4.</u></a>	The principle is not the completion; against formalism
17	<a href="#"><u>5.</u></a>	The absolute is subject –
18-25	<a href="#"><u>6.</u></a>	– and what this is
26	<a href="#"><u>7.</u></a>	The element of knowledge
27-29	<a href="#"><u>8.</u></a>	The ascent into this is the <i>Phenomenology of the Spirit</i>
30-32	<a href="#"><u>9.</u></a>	The transformation of the notion and the familiar into thought ...
33-37	<a href="#"><u>10.</u></a>	– and this into the Concept/Notion
38-40	<a href="#"><u>11.</u></a>	In what way the <i>Phenomenology of the Spirit</i> is negative or contains what is false
41-46	<a href="#"><u>12.</u></a>	Historical and mathematical truth
47-49	<a href="#"><u>13.</u></a>	The nature of philosophical truth and its method
50-58	<a href="#"><u>14.</u></a>	Against schematizing formalism
58	<a href="#"><u>15.</u></a>	The demands of the study of philosophy
59	<a href="#"><u>16.</u></a>	Argumentative thinking in its negative attitude ...
60-67	<a href="#"><u>17.</u></a>	... in its positive attitude; its subject
68-70	<a href="#"><u>18.</u></a>	Natural philosophizing as healthy common sense and as genius
71-72	<a href="#"><u>19.</u></a>	Conclusion: the author's relation to the public

This document is given for discussion. Like [all the others](#), this blog-post or covering e-mail message is only intended as a potential opening to discussion and not as an explanation nor,

least of all, as a didactic prescription. What we will do now is to give some short quotations from the document, but first just remark that it becomes clear why **Andy Blunden** (pictured above) recommends this document, because it contains some quite direct and straightforward statements by Hegel, which may well help us as we go along.

## Extracts from Hegel's "Preface to the Phenomenology"

### Passage 2

*"The more the ordinary mind takes the opposition between true and false to be fixed, the more is it accustomed to expect either agreement or contradiction with a given philosophical system, and only to see reason for the one or the other in any explanatory statement concerning such a system. It does not conceive the diversity of philosophical systems as the progressive evolution of truth; rather, it sees only contradiction in that variety."*

*"The bud disappears when the blossom breaks through, and we might say that the former is refuted by the latter; in the same way when the fruit comes, the blossom may be explained to be a false form of the plant's existence, for the fruit appears as its true nature in place of the blossom. These stages are not merely differentiated; they supplant one another as being incompatible with one another."*

*"But the ceaseless activity of their own inherent nature*

*makes them at the same time moments of an organic unity, where they not merely do not contradict one another, but where one is as necessary as the other; and this equal necessity of all moments constitutes alone and thereby the life of the whole.”*

## **Passage 11**

*“... it is not difficult to see that our epoch is a birth-time, and a period of transition.”*

*“The spirit of man has broken with the old order of things hitherto prevailing, and with the old ways of thinking, and is in the mind to let them all sink into the depths of the past and to set about its own transformation. It is indeed never at rest, but carried along the stream of progress ever onward.”*

*“But it is here as in the case of the birth of a child; after a long period of nutrition in silence, the continuity of the gradual growth in size, of quantitative change, is suddenly cut short by the first breath drawn - there is a break in the process, a qualitative change and the child is born.”*

## **Passage 12**

*“In the same way, science, **the crowning glory of a spiritual world**, is not found complete in its initial stages.”*

### Passage 13

*“Intelligibility is the form in which science is offered to everyone, and is the open road to it made plain for all. To reach rational knowledge by our intelligence is the just demand of the mind which comes to science.”*

### Passage 17

*“In my view - a view which the developed exposition of the system itself can alone justify - everything depends on grasping and expressing the ultimate truth not as Substance but as Subject as well.”*

### Passage 23

*“The need to think of the Absolute as subject, has led men to make use of statements like “God is the eternal”, the “moral order of the world”, or “love”, etc. In such propositions the truth is just barely stated to be Subject, but not set forth as the process of reflectively mediating itself with itself. In a proposition of that kind we begin with the word God. By itself this is a meaningless sound, a mere name; the predicate says afterwards what it is, gives it content and meaning: the empty beginning becomes real knowledge only when we thus get to the end of the statement. So far as that goes, why not speak alone of the eternal, of the moral order of the world, etc., or, like the ancients, of pure conceptions such as being, the one, etc., i.e. of what gives the meaning without adding the meaningless sound at all?”*

## Passage 27

*“It is this process by which science in general comes about, this gradual development of knowing, that is set forth here in the Phenomenology of Mind. Knowing, as it is found at the start, mind in its immediate and primitive stage, is without the essential nature of mind, is sense-consciousness. To reach the stage of genuine knowledge, or produce the element where science is found - the pure conception of science itself - a long and laborious journey must be undertaken. This process towards science, as regards the content it will bring to light and the forms it will assume in the course of its progress, will not be what is primarily imagined by leading the unscientific consciousness up to the level of science: it will be something different, too, from establishing and laying the foundations of science; and anyway something else than the sort of **ecstatic enthusiasm which starts straight off with absolute knowledge, as if shot out of a pistol...**”*

As much as Hegel is usually careful never to give an impression of summarising his work, yet here in this Preface are many statements of a rather concrete, elegant and satisfying nature.

- The above is to introduce the original reading-text: Preface to Hegel's Phenomenology: On scientific knowledge, [Part 1](#) and [Part 2](#).
- To download any of the CU courses in PDF files [please click here](#).